

Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the specification as follows:

On Page 1 of the specification, insert before the first line the following new section:

Cross Reference to Related Applications

This application is a continuation of U.S. Application No. 09/972,655, filed October 5, 2001, which is a continuation of Application No. 09/779,207, filed February 8, 2001, now U.S. Patent No. 6,325,610, which is a divisional of Application No. 09/219,803, filed December 23, 1998, now U.S. Patent No. 6,247,986.

On Page 7, line 4, the paragraph should be amended to read as follows:

In an illustrative aspect, the method of the present invention includes using a slurry which contains a ceramic powder, a curable organic binder, and a diluent. The slurry is described in co-related U.S. Patent Number 6,352,763. ~~and pending~~ and ~~cofiled~~ U.S. Patent Application ~~File No. 54597USA7A~~, which is incorporated herein by reference. When the binder is in its initial uncured state, the slurry can be shaped and aligned on a substrate using a mold. After curing the binder, the slurry is in at least a semi-rigid state which can retain the shape in which it was molded. This cured, rigid state is referred to as the green state, just as shaped ceramic materials are called “green” before they are sintered. When the slurry is cured, the mold can be removed from the green state microstructures. The green state material can subsequently be debinded and/or fired. Debinding, or burn out, occurs when the green state material is heated to a temperature at which the binder can diffuse to a surface of the material and volatilize. Debinding is usually followed by increasing the temperature to a predetermined firing temperature to sinter or fuse the particles of the ceramic powder. After firing, the material can be referred to as fired material. Fired microstructures are referred to herein as ceramic microstructures.